



Women's Center
of Southeastern
Connecticut Inc.

Administration:

16 Jay Street
New London, CT
06320-5910

860.447.0366

Fax 860.440.3327

www.womenscenterofsect.org

February 23, 2009

**Testimony in Favor of H.B. 6494, "An Act Concerning Teen Dating
Violence Education," with Substitute Language Added**

Good evening. My name is Cathy Zeiner, and I am here to speak in favor of House Bill 6494 adding teen dating violence education to the list of required subject matter taught in public schools. And I am also here to request that the **substitute language** offered by the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, which states that **"as with other programs developed through the Violence Against Women Act, schools must work in cooperation with domestic violence victim service providers in the institution of this training."**

I am the Executive Director of the Women's Center of Southeastern Connecticut, Inc. *We provide domestic violence services to more than 6,000 victims per year in New London County.*

Our mission mandates us to strive for a violence-free society, and we know that to accomplish that mission, and to eliminate the need for all of our other programs, we need to start with our youth.

With the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reporting **16.3%, the second highest percentage in the nation**, of Connecticut high school students reporting having been hit, slapped or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend, **we can't continue, year-after-year, to graduate students who believe that this behavior is normal.**

Since 1993, we have been providing school-based, violence prevention education to students in grades K-12. Last year, we provided programming in 11 different school districts to more than 3,000 students, totaling more than 28,000 student-hours. Those totals included 1584 high schools and middle school students receiving education in forming healthy relationships and dating violence, and usually included additional sessions on sexual assault, sexual harassment, and gender images in the media.

Leave a
Legacy



CCADV
Member Agency
Connecticut
Coalition Against
Domestic Violence



Member Agency
United Way
of Southeastern
Connecticut